

Message Text

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TAGS: ETRD BEXP US UR

SUBJECT: US-USSR TRADE: RECENT PRESS COVERAGE

USDOC/FOR BEWT

1. TWO RECENT ARTICLES IN CENTRAL PRESS GIVE INFUSION OF OPTIMISM TO OFFICIAL SOVIET LINE ON PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER CLOSING OF US-USSR TRADE TIES. FIRST IS BRIEF PIECE IN DEC 24 PRAVDA REPORTING ON MOSCOW VISIT OF HAROLD SCOTT, PRESIDENT OF US-USSR TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL. SECOND IS RATHER LENGTHY INTERVIEW WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE HENRY TURNER, HELD DURING HIS VISIT TO MOSCOW AS LEADER OF EXECUTIVE LEVEL TRADE MISSION AND PUBLISHED IN DEC 26 SOTSIALISTICHESKAYA INDUSTRIYA.

2. PRAVDA ARTICLE QUOTES SCOTT AS "VERY OPTIMISTICALLY" EVALUATING PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADING COOPERATION WITH USSR AND AS SAYING THAT RECENT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION AGAINST MFN AND CREDITS WILL MEAN, IN FIRST INSTANCE, BLOW TO AMERICAN ECONOMY. WHILE ROAD TO MFN IS STILL LONG, HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO SCOTT, "WE ARE SURE THAT THE PRESIDENT

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WILL N P SIGN ANY LEGISLATION WHICH DOES NOT CORRESPOND

TO HIS POSITIONS AND INTENTIONS TO DEVELOP TRADE TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION."

3. TURNER INTERVIEW, IN MUCH THE SAME VEIN, POINTS TO CURRENT FAVORABLE STATE OF US-USSR BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS, OFFERING AS PROOF "AGREEMENTS" REACHED BY SEVERAL AMERICAN COMPANIES DURING EXECUTIVE LEVEL TRADE MISSION (SPECIFICALLY DEERE AND CO., UNIROYAL, AND RCA) FOR SUPPLY OF EQUIPMENT IN NEAR FUTURE TO USSR.

4. COMMENT: PUBLICATION OF TURNER INTERVIEW AT THIS LATE DATE--COMING AFTER HOUSE VOTE ON TRADE BILL-IS SOMEWHAT CURIOUS SINCE HIS STATEMENTS SEEM SOMEWHAT LESS AUTHORITATIVE NOW THAN THEY ONCE MIGHT HAVE. HE IS QUOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, AS SEEING "REAL POSSIBILITIES" FOR GRANTING OF MFN AND AS STATING THAT PRESIDENT NIXON AND HIS ADMINISTRATION ARE ACHIEVING PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION ASSURING SOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM, LEGISLATION PROVIDING NOT ONLY FOR MFN BUT FOR CREDITS WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR EXPANSION OF MUTUAL TRADE.

5. THIS END-OF-YEAR PRESS COVERAGE OF BILATERAL TRADE SCENE IS CLEAR--IF SOMEWHAT FORCED--EFFORT TO SUSTAIN MOMENTUM OF PITCH BUILT UP DURING YEAR, CULMINATING IN SHULTZ VISIT IN OCTOBER, BUT BADLY DEFLATED SINCE THEN WITH HOUSE TYING OF MFN AND CREDITS TO IMMIGRATION QUESTION. SOVIETS, IN FACT, ARE PUTTING BEST GLOSS POSSIBLE ON CURRENT PROBLEMS OF MFN AND CREDITS. FURTHER INDICATION OF THIS ATTITUDE IS PUBLICATION IN DEC 26 PRAVDA OF INTERVIEW WITH SENATOR FULBRIGHT IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED HOPE FOR OVERCOMING RECENT DIFFICULTIES IN AREA OF US-USSR TRADE TIES (I.E., HOUSE ACTION ON MFN AND CREDITS) SINCE "TRADE DEVELOPMENT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE FURTHER NORMALIZATION OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS." SOMMERLATTE

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